tonnes as compared to 123.27 lakh tonnes procured during the previous year. Procurement of rice during 1995-96 kharif marketing season also came down to 98.80 lakh tonnes compared with 134.03 lakh tonnes procured for Central Poo! in the previous year. Large quantities of wheat and rice have since been disposed of from the Central Pool by way of open sale export etc. These developments have considerably relieved the pressure on storage system. The existing system of procurement of foodgrains could thus be continued.

Procurement of wheat and rice by FCI

1077. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of wheat and rice procured by the Food Corporation of India in different parts of the country so far during the current year;

(b) whether the procurement has been as per the target fixed: if not. the reasons therefor:

(c) if so, the steps Government are taking to meet the target:

(d) whether Government agencies arc offering the farmers Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 less than the support price and

(e) if so. the reasons (therefor and the steps Government are taking to ensure payment of support price to the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV): (a) A quantity of 81.83 lakh tonnes of wheal and 45.33 lakh tonnes of rice have been procured for Central Pool upto 27.11.% during the current Rabi and Kharif Marketing Season 1996-97.

(b) and (c) Wheat and paddy are procured for Central Pool under minimum price support scheme on a totally voluntary basis. Rice is procured under a system of statutory levy imposed on rice millers and traders. The quantum of levy rice collected in turn depends on the quantity of paddy purchased by the millers. No target for procurement of wheat and rice can thus be fixed.

(d) No. Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

The House then adjourned at ten minutes past eleven of the clock till eleven of the clock on Tuesday, the 3rd December, 1996.